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St. Catherine's Newsletter

Assumption Greek
Orthodox Church

September, 2011



Fun Facts

Cubs or Sox fan

Deacon: Cubs, "I'm allergic to the White Sox."

Diakonissa: Cubs

Favorite sport to watch

Both: basketball

Favorite candy

Deacon: peanut butter twix

Diakonissa: chocolate

Favorite subject in school

Deacon: English

Diakonissa: math, religion

Favorite Greek food

Deacon: spanakopita, frappe

Diakonissa: souvlakia

Favorite church holiday

Both: Pascha

Favorite vacation place

Deacon: Thessaloniki

Diakonissa: Hawaii

First job

Deacon: Dad's restaurant

Diakonissa: Dad's grocery store

Welcome Deacon Athanasios and Diakonissa Katerina

by Marika Maggos

The Assumption Parish welcomes Deacon Athanasios and Diakonissa Katerina to our church! We are thrilled that they have joined our Sunday Church School family, and they in turn, are excited to be here with us!

Deacon Athanasios Papagiannis (soon to be Father Athanasios) grew up in Des Plaines. He has two older sisters, Georgia and Soula, and a little brother Nick. He attended church at St. John's, where he participated in Sunday School and GOYA. Before deciding to become a priest, Deacon received a degree in English education from Illinois State University and taught language arts for 3 years. He then moved on to getting his masters in social work and worked as a social worker in Chicago public schools for 5 years. After that, he proceeded to Holy Cross Seminary, and is now at our church. Deacon Athanasios looks forward to teaching, preaching, and working with the kids of Assumption. "When you walk into Panagia's, you notice the beauty of the building, but it's also special because of the beauty of its people," stated Deacon Athanasios. He wants us to know he is here to help us, to help the community, and to follow in the footsteps of all the wonderful priests that have been at Assumption.

Diakonissa Katerina Papagiannis (soon to be Presbyteria) grew up in Palos Hills with her parents and older sister. She went to Sts. Constantine and Helen Church. She was very involved there—attended Koras School, sang in the junior choir, played on the basketball team, and was in GOYA, Jr. Olympics, bible study, and Greek dance. She acquired her math and education degree from University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana, and got her masters in administration at University of Illinois at Chicago. Diakonissa is currently a math teacher at Naperville North High School. She is very excited to be part of Assumption: "Ever since I was a little girl, I would go to Panagia's with my mom, nouna, and sister, and we would stay for the all night vigil. My sister and I would fall asleep in the pew." Diakonissa looks forward to serving the church as best as she can and meeting the amazing people. She hopes to help the youth with their needs, help them learn, and help them have fun.

Deach Athanasios enjoys sports, especially basketball and baseball; he also enjoys writing and reading. Diakonissa enjoys exercising, basketball and dancing. She also likes reading. Together they enjoy going to church and traveling.

Deacon's ordination to the priesthood takes place Sunday, September 18 th. Let us all be present to witness this sacrament and welcome our new assistant priest and presbyteria.



The Sacrament of the Holy Priesthood (Ordination) by Very Rev. Fr. Timothy Bakakos

"For the Church of Christ is Christ's Body, according to Saint Paul (Col. 1:24), and the man who is entrusted with it must train it to perfect health...."

---Saint John Chrysostom

The Sacrament of Holy Ordination (Holy Orders) was established by Jesus Christ on the Day of Pentecost when the Disciples received the Holy Spirit at the upper room.

As the New Testament Book of *Acts of the Apostles* informs us, by the *laying of their hands*, they ordained priests and later, priests and bishops, and gave them the power of the Holy Spirit that they received on the Pentecost Day. This act is called **Ordination**. As the Early Christian Church grew, more Churches, Dioceses, and later, Archdioceses and Patriarchates were established, and as a result, more elected servants of God were needed, and more ordinations took place.

A person who wants to serve as a clergyman has to show an inclination and special love to the Holy mission of God on earth. His life, his conduct should be according to the Gospel teachings. This is done in cooperation with his Spiritual Father, who guides him through the process.

If his Spiritual Father finds his character and his faith suitable to this great mission, he reports to the Bishop/Metropolitan/Archbishop and gives a letter of recommendation. The Hierarch, after his investigation, decides or rejects the petition of the priest (Spiritual Father). The man, upon approval of the Hierarch, enters Theological School for seven years, receiving both his Bachelor and Master's Degrees. Upon completion of his studies, the candidate must decide upon a life as a married or unmarried (celibate) clergyman. That decision must be made **prior** to ordination.

The Order of *Holy Diaconate* is the first step to the Clergyhood. The second is the *Holy Priesthood*, and the third is *Episcopacy*. All Ordinations take place in different parts of the Divine Liturgy. The Ordination is very important for the performance and execution of the Holy Sacraments and the salvation of the people of God.

The Sacrament of the Holy Priesthood derives its origin from Christ, the great High Priest, Who was **"holy, blameless, unstained, separated from sinners, exalted above the heavens... a minister in the sanctuary which is set up not by man but by the Lord."** (*Hebrews 7:26, 8:2*). Jesus Christ as the heavenly High Priest, offered Himself as a sacrifice on the Cross **"for all," and conferred His priesthood upon His Apostles.** (*John 20:21-23, Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:15-18, Acts 2:33*).

From the time of the Holy Apostles, the office of the Priesthood passed on in an unbroken chain to the first clergymen whom they ordained, and through them to their successors. This is called **Apostolic Succession**, and it is a fundamental and integral teaching in the Orthodox Church, because only through it can the clergymen receive the authority to become real representatives of Christ and the Apostles of the Church.

It is because of this Apostolic Succession that the priest is given the power of the Holy Spirit his ordination. They are given the authority to bless people; they have the right to forgive or retain sins; they have the authority to bless the Holy Sacraments and ask the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Holy Communion and on different situations for sanctification purposes.

The priest also has the great responsibility for themselves to keep themselves holy and suitable according to the teachings of the Gospel. They have to serve this great ministry with dignity, and teach the Gospel to the faithful and explain all the Holy Traditions that derive from the Holy Bible. Because of these reasons, the lay people respect their clergy, who dedicated their life to the mission of Christ and to the salvation of the souls of their faithful who are entrusted to him by the Bishop and God.

The question is sometimes asked why we are supposed to kiss the right hand of the clergy? The lay people are asked to always venerate (kiss) the right hand of the clergy because the clergyman is filled with the power of the Holy Spirit from the day of their ordination, and it is through the right hand of the priest that the power of the Holy Spirit is dispensed upon the Sacraments and blessings. It is disrespectful and not proper to simply shake his hand. Those who do not venerate the hand of an orthodox clergy express that they do not believe the clergy carry the power of the Holy Spirit through their ordination. **Apostolic Succession** is like a chain that never broke from the day of the Pentecost, and the work of the priest is that tradition that literally dates back to Jesus Christ, Himself.

As successors of the Holy Apostles and representatives of Christ in His Church, clergymen continue the work of Jesus. They **teach the Word of God; offer the Holy Eucharist and administer the other sacraments; they govern the Church; and take care of the spiritual needs of the members of their congregations.**

"Your priests, O Lord, shall clothe themselves with righteousness, and Your saints shall rejoice with joy...." (Psalm 132:9).

The Priest's Vestments

Sticharion: Long garment reaching to the floor, with long sleeves like a tunic. Sticharion means 'garment with lines' because in ancient times, it was white with darker lines running through it. This represents the baptismal robe and the spiritual cleanliness the clergy must possess when officiating in the Divine Liturgy and other Church Services. It also signifies the white robe of the angel who announced to the Myrrh bearing women the glad tidings of the Lord's Resurrection (Mark 16:5). The clergyman recites the following prayer when he puts on the sticharion: *"My soul shall rejoice in the Lord, for He has clothed me with the garment of righteousness and has covered me with a robe of gladness...."* (Isaiah 61:10).

Epitrachelion: This garment worn around the neck, usually consists of two narrow strips sewn or buttoned together in the front. It is richly embroidered with crosses at set distances. This vestment symbolizes the grace of the Holy Spirit that flows down abundantly upon the officiating clergy. Adorning the Epitrachelion are two set of tassels; the set on top represents the souls of the living which the priest is responsible for and the set on the bottom represents the souls of those who have fallen asleep in the Lord. The following prayer is recited when this vestment is put on: *"Blessed is God who pours out His grace upon His priests, as myrrh upon the head that ran down the beard of Aaron, which ran down to the helm of his garment."* (Psalm 133:2).

Zone: This is a belt worn around the waist over the Sticharion and Epitrachelion. It is a sign of the strength given to the priest by the Holy Spirit to lead the community in prayer. The symbolism of the zone is signified by the following biblical passage which the celebrant recites while he fastens it over the Sticharion and the Epitrachelion: *"Blessed is God who girds me with strength and makes my way blameless."* (Psalm 18: 32-33).

Epimanikia: These are cuffs which are worn around the wrists of the priest. Symbolically they represent the creative power of God. The clergyman recites the following prayer when he puts the Epimankia on his right hand: *"Your right hand, O Lord, is glorified in strength. Your right hand, has crushed the enemies. In the fullness of Your glory You have shattered the adversaries."* (Exodus 15: 6-7). While he places the cuff on his left hand he prays: *"Your hands have made me and have fashioned me. Grant me understanding and I shall learn from Your commandments."* (Psalm 119:73).

Epigonation: This is a diamond shaped piece of stiff cloth that hangs at knee-height. This vestment is one of distinction, and is worn by the bishop and only a few priests who have been elevated to the ranks of Archimandrite, Protopresbyteros or Ekonomos. The epigonation is decorated with an embroidered cross, the figure of the Savior or that of an angel. It signifies the sword of the Spirit, that is the strength of the Word of God. The clergyman recites the following prayer when he puts on the Epigonation: *"Gird your sword upon Your thigh, O Mighty One, and in Your splendor and beauty string Your bow. Prosper and reign because of truth, meekness, and righteousness. Your right hand shall lead You wondrously...."* (Psalm 45: 3-5).

Phelonion: This is a type of sleeveless cloak in the shape of a cone with an opening for the head. It has the same symbolic meaning as the bishop's Sakkos, in that it represents the red tunic with which the Romans dressed the Savior before his Crucifixion, and denotes that the priests are invested with truth and should be ministers of the truth. The prayer that the priest says as he puts on the Phelonion is: *"Your priests, O Lord, shall clothe themselves with righteousness, and Your saints shall rejoice with joy...."* (Psalm 132:9).

A Final Note:

It is important to remember that when the celebrant (Bishop, Priest or Deacon) wears his sacred vestments, he is an instrument of God, through whom the Holy Spirit acts. Whatever he may be as an individual outside the church, when officiating he is the representative of Christ through whom the Grace of the Holy Spirit is given to the faithful. He receives this *gift* at the time of his ordination. This is indicated by one of the most beautiful inaudible prayers of the celebrant during the Divine Liturgy:

"No one caught up in the desires and delights of the flesh is worthy to come forth or draw near to minister to You, the King of glory; for to serve You is great and awesome even for the heavenly powers.... Therefore I implore You, as alone, benevolent and quick to hear, look on me Your sinful and unworthy servant, and purge my heart and soul of an evil conscience, rendering me able, by the power of Your Holy Spirit, and invested with the grace of Priesthood, to stand before this Your holy table and consecrate Your pure and sacred Body and Your precious Blood...."



INFO

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**HOURS
SUNDAY CHURCH
SCHOOL DIVINE
LITURGY—9:45 AM**

We're on the web!
www.assumptionchicago.org

MAIL TO:



Assump- tion Fans Cheer On Chicago Sky

By Jayne Jurasek

The St. Catherine's Newsletter was created in 2007 by a Sunday School student. It serves to inform, educate, and entertain the children of the Assumption Greek Orthodox Church community. All are welcome and encouraged to contribute to the newsletter.

If you are interested in writing an article, sending in a self written piece of work, or just for more information... PLEASE CONTACT: Very Rev. Fr. Timothy Bakakos —FrTimothy@assumptionchicago.org or Dr. Evie Maggos— demags@aol.com

**SAVE THE DATE
Harvest Day Celebration
Saturday, November 5th
Plato Hall**

The Chicago Sky is a WNBA women's basketball team that a group of Assumption families went to see. When I walked into the stadium, at first there were barely any people. Then after a while everyone started to flow in. The Sky was playing the New York Liberty in the Allstate Arena. We had really good seats at the game. During the game, the lead changed several times. But at the last few minutes, the Sky worked up their game and played hard defense so Liberty could not score. Then the Sky kept making shots until they won 74-73! It was a really close game! They also gave a raffle for our church and the prize was a bobble head and an autograph from Sylvia Fowles. My brother Jimmy won that. The game was so fun! I think everyone had a great time! After the game our group was invited down to the basketball court for a

Fanari Camp

by Eleni Caprio

Welcome back to Sunday Church School! I hope everyone had a good summer. Over the summer I went to a camp called Fanari sponsored by the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago. People from all over come—from St. Louis, Chicago, and other places too. I went there this summer and Sophia and I were the only ones from Assumption! I assume some of you don't know about it, so I decided to tell you a little bit about it. When you arrive, you are assigned to a hotel room and your Bible Study group. You go to your room, unpack and get to know your roommates. After that you go to church for initiation. You have church every morning and evening. In the evening after church you have devotionals. During the week in church you have confession and Divine Liturgy. There are scheduled activities throughout the week. There is Greek dancing one night, a surprise activity another night, and a dance the last night. This year's dance had an eighties theme and was really fun. I made a lot of new friends and would definitely go next year. I hope you guys will read this and decide to come next year. If you do, hopefully I will see you there! Have a blessed and fun Church year!